

The Republican Governors Association had one overarching goal this year: win at least one of the governors' races taking place in New Jersey and Virginia. We knew victory in one race would reverse a troubling trend line for Republicans and winning both would give our Party serious momentum heading into 2010.

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We faced tremendous obstacles in New Jersey and Virginia, but thanks to a pair of great candidates and unprecedented investments by the RGA, we picked up two states that for more than a decade had been moving more and more Democrat. These victories will serve as a springboard into 2010, when we have 37 races and an opportunity to reclaim a majority of governorships for the GOP.

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Many people share the credit for our successes. First, I want to thank my colleagues for their assistance and support this year, especially Vice Chairman Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota, the Executive Committee, and recent former chairmen Governor Mark Sanford, Governor Rick Perry and Governor Sonny Perdue.

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Our victories this year were set in motion in January 2007 when all the governors committed to a four-year plan to win back the majority of governorships for the GOP. Thanks to strategic targeting and disciplined budgeting, the RGA carried forward more than \$14 million into 2009 and had the resources to invest over \$13 million in New Jersey and Virginia.

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Barely more than one year ago, President Obama carried both states overwhelmingly and there was talk that the Republican Party was hopelessly lost.

Bob McDonnell, Chris Christie, and the RGA proved this year that by focusing on the issues voters care about and by running the right type of campaigns, Republicans can win anywhere in the country.

In Virginia, Bob McDonnell won an overwhelming victory against an opponent he defeated by just 323 votes four years ago and in a state that hadn't elected a Republican to the governorship in 12 years.

Bob also led a GOP ticket that became only the second in history to sweep all three statewide offices.

Chris Christie's winning margin over Democratic incumbent Jon Corzine was the largest for a Republican since 1985.

Chris proved that even in a state where registered Democrats overwhelmingly outnumber registered Republicans, we can still win by focusing on pocketbook issues like taxes and jobs.

Bob McDonnell, Chris Christie, and the RGA created a successful model for how we will win many of our targeted states next year. The candidates focused on their positive message and vision for their states while the RGA made game changing investments and ran ~~tough, on-target independent~~ ad campaigns ~~that focused on~~ their opponents' ~~records and liberal ties~~.

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Last, I want to thank everyone who helped the RGA succeed this year: the people who came to forums and exchanged ideas so my colleagues and I could help our constituents; RGA Executive Director Nick Ayers and the talented staff; the RGA finance committee; and the many contributors who believe in our cause.

I look forward to a BIG year for the RGA in 2010.

Sincerely,

Governor Haley Barbour
RGA Chairman